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Insecurity Motivated White House Aides

DETROIT (AP) — White House aides involved in the Watergate affair and its cover-up were not motivated by arrogance but by deep insecurity, says former presidential aide Charles W. Colson.

Colson told The Detroit News in an interview published Wednesday:

"The thing that is completely misunderstood about Watergate is that everybody thinks the people surrounding President Nixon were drunk with power. You know, 'the arrogance of the White House aides' is a phrase you now most commonly hear. But it wasn't arrogance at all. It was insecurity.

"That insecurity began to breed a form of paranoia. We overreacted to the attacks against us and to a lot of things. As I look back on it, now that I've been out a few months, I realize we developed a state of mind that wasn't the healthiest."

Colson, who has yet to testify before the Senate Watergate committee, reiterated his strong defense of the President's innocence in the Watergate affair as well as his own.

Reflecting on the 1972 campaign, Colson said, "Maybe one of the mistakes of the Nixon apparatus last year was that we tried to get the politics out of the White House by setting up the Committee to Re-elect the President, which then went beserk and did a lot of dumb things.

"What we did, in effect, was create something of a monster that went a little wild."

Colson said the President's staff grew increasingly worried as the 1972 re-election campaign drew closer.

"With a president who had been elected as the representative of a minority party, with 43 per cent of the vote.